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General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Friday, 6 October 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he hoped to draw on the wealth of experience and knowledge of the members of the Committee as its work proceeded and hoped that its deliberations would be frank, focused and marked by a spirit of cordiality. In the past few years, major strides had been made in addressing almost all the main areas dealt with by the Committee. The recent major international conferences, from the World Summit for Children to the Fourth World Conference on Women, had forged a broad-based consensus and platforms of action in various fields. The Committee should build on the results of those conferences and strive to bridge any gaps that might come about in those areas.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had proposed Mrs. Alvarez (Dominican Republic) and the Group of Western European and Other States had proposed Mr. Rata (New Zealand) for the offices of Vice-Chairmen.

3. Mrs. Alvarez (Dominican Republic) and Mr. Rata (New Zealand) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) had been proposed by the Group of African States for the office of Rapporteur.

5. Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

6. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) said that during the intensive informal consultations held by the Chairman on the election of officers, his delegation had voluntarily agreed to accept the office of Rapporteur in order to solve the problem that had arisen and enable the Committee to proceed with its work.

7. Mr. RATA (New Zealand) and Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) expressed appreciation to the delegation of the Sudan for the flexibility that it had shown in order to facilitate the work of the Committee.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/50/250; A/C.3/50/1; A/C.3/50/L.1/Rev.1 and L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

8. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the letter dated 22 September 1995 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Third Committee (A/C.3/50/1), which contained the list of items on the agenda allocated to the Committee and referred to the recommendations on the organization of the session contained in section II of the report of the General Committee (A/50/250), as well as paragraph 39 of section IV and paragraph 46 of section V concerning the agenda of the Main Committees. Those recommendations had been approved by the General Assembly at its third plenary meeting and the President of the General Assembly requested cooperation in implementing them.

9. Delegations were reminded of the utmost importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring effective and orderly organization of work and were requested to make full use of the number of meetings allocated to the Committee. The General Assembly had waived the requirement of the presence of one quarter of the members of Main Committees to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed. The requirement of the presence of a majority of the members for any decision to be taken would be maintained. In accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote would be limited to 10 minutes. At the suggestion of the Secretary-General, the General Committee had recommended that points of order should be limited to five minutes.

10. The target date for conclusion of the work of the Committee was Friday, 1 December.

11. As all the members of the Committee were aware, the United Nations was facing a serious financial situation. The Secretary-General has decided that the only viable course of action was to implement, with effect from 15 September, various measures to curtail certain services from the Secretariat. That would affect the Third Committee directly and must be taken very seriously. There was no possibility for extended meetings, night meetings or weekend meetings. The provision of the Committee's substantive documentation would be affected by the Secretariat's ability to process its documents without the advantage of overtime services. The Committee had a very full agenda and must make the best use of the time available.

12. The Secretariat was proposing that the Committee should establish time-limits for statements, as it had in the past, of 10 minutes for individual statements and 15 minutes for group statements. In that connection, he reminded delegations of the very useful practice of providing in extenso written texts of their statements and extracting from those texts the remarks that the representatives might wish to make orally to the Committee in order to observe the time-limit.

13. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation fully supported the efforts to reduce expenditure but stressed that savings should not be brought about at the expense of any of the official languages used by delegations.

14. The CHAIRMAN announced that the meeting would be suspended to enable the Committee to meet informally in order to consider the programme of work.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

15. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt its programme of work (A/C.3/50/L.1/Rev.1).

16. It was so decided.

17. The CHAIRMAN reiterated the Secretariat's proposal in document A/C.3/50/L.1/Rev.1 that the time-limit for statements should be set at 10 minutes, with the exception of statements being made by the spokesmen of groups

of delegations, which would be set at 15 minutes. He took it that the Committee agreed to that proposal.

18. It was so decided.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with established practice, the number of statements in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item. The first right of reply should be no longer than five minutes and the second should not exceed three minutes.

20. The Committee had continued work in progress relating to the follow-up of the Vienna Conference on Human Rights. He therefore suggested that the Working Group of the Third Committee should continue its negotiations under the chairmanship of Mr. Turk (Slovenia).

21. It was so decided.

22. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to extend invitations to the various special rapporteurs and representatives to present their reports to the Committee at the current session.

23. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at noon.